

Parenting the First Year

Months 6-7

How Baby Is Changing

Teething often begins during the sixth month. Your baby may drool more than usual and be uncomfortable and fussy. Cold teething rings and teething biscuits may soothe her sore gums.

Your baby may be able to roll from her stomach to her back and then over to her stomach again, with a rest in between. Some babies can get across a room this way.

Your baby's legs are getting stronger. She probably loves to stand up with you holding under her arms. She may bounce up and down. These exercises help her legs prepare for crawling and walking.

Some 6-month-olds will begin learning to sit up. Be sure your baby has soft surfaces to land on. Keep an eye on her. She may get stuck in an uncomfortable position.

Is your baby showing more fear of strangers? This means she recognizes people she knows from people she doesn't.

Hold your baby when meeting people. Let her get used to them slowly, especially child-care providers. Maybe have the "stranger" hand her a favorite toy.

Babies Love Other Babies

Around town, you will meet other parents with their babies. Notice how much the babies like to look at each other? Babies really like other babies.

Make a date to meet another parent and baby at the park or in your home. Make it a fun time. See how the babies react to each other.

It's great to watch another parent and baby together. You can learn a lot just by watching, and they learn from you. Sometimes it's just fun to laugh together about the good times and the hard times with a baby!



Changing Your Child Care

There are many reasons why it may be necessary to change your child care. You may find child care of a higher quality or that is more convenient.

What will your baby think about the change?

Babies need a more consistent routine in their lives than the rest of us, especially when it comes to the people who meet their everyday needs.

A baby needs to trust the people around him. This trust is the basis for good relationships later. Your baby will form this trust with you and a few other adults who meet his needs, including child-care providers.

Your baby needs to feel secure in every place he spends time. When he has many different child-care providers, he may have a hard time forming close bonds. He requires a provider who will care for his individual needs quickly and sensitively, someone he will learn to trust.

Try to find a provider who enjoys your baby and will be available on a regular basis. If you need to change providers for a good reason, that's OK. But try to limit the changes.

Your Baby Wants You To Know by the End of Seven Months

How I Grow

- I turn and twist in all directions.
- I sometimes sit up for several minutes.
- I creep backwards and forwards on my stomach on the floor.
- I hold on to an object with one hand and then put it in the other hand.
- I hold one building block, reach for a second one and look for a third one right away.
- I grab for an object when it drops.

How I Talk

- I make sounds such as f, v, th, s, sh, sz, m and n.
- I still babble a lot, but I have more control of sounds.
- I may begin to understand some words by your tone of voice.

How I Respond

- I pick up things, shake them and then listen to the sound they make when I drop them.
- I play games with people I know.
- I get upset when I'm around grown-up strangers, but I'm usually friendly to children I don't know.
- Sometimes I coo, hum or stop crying when I hear music.
- I keep very busy doing something all the time.

How I Understand

- I know that I have to use my hands to pick up something.
- I look at and study things for a long time.
- I turn objects upside down just to get another view of them.
- I turn when I hear my name.
- I may have one favorite toy or blanket.

How I Feel

- I haven't learned how to control my feelings yet.
- I complain and howl when I don't get my way.
- I giggle, coo and squeal with joy when I'm happy.
- I may have very strong likes and dislikes about food.

How You Can Help Me Learn

He or She, Him or Her

These newsletters give equal time to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." Keep in mind that we are talking about all children when we use "he" or "she."

- Take me to see other babies, but stay with us so we don't hurt each other.
- Blow bubbles for me to watch on a sunny day. But be careful not to get them in my eyes.
- Give me things to play with that make noise. A crinkly paper bag or some blocks I can bang together are great.
- Float a toy in my bathtub for me to play with, but don't leave me alone in the bathtub! I'd like something to pour water out of, too.
- Read nursery rhymes and stories to me. Sing me lullabies.
- Hold me and look into my eyes when you talk to me and play with me.

Children are very different from each other. Don't worry if your child manages some skills earlier or later than other children. Most children tend to focus on one area, like physical or language development, and pay less attention to other areas. Get to know your unique baby and celebrate each new skill with him!

Discipline Is Teaching, Not Punishing

Babies this age cannot obey or disobey parents. Their minds are not developed enough for them to know right from wrong. However, they may do things that are unsafe or that you think are wrong.

For the next several years, parents and others need to help children learn how to behave. Discipline really means teaching, not punishing.

If you are a warm and loving parent, your baby will learn to trust you. The more she trusts you, the more easily she will accept the occasional limits you set. Research with older children shows that discipline works best for parents who have a caring relationship with the child.

Here are some ways to teach your baby what is acceptable.

- **Praise your baby** when she does things you like. Infants like adult attention, such as words, hugs and smiles. The more positive you are when your baby is good, the more she will pay attention when you disapprove. Praise means more than “Good girl.” Explain the specific behavior you appreciate, such as “You are eating so well!”
- **Ignore misbehavior if it is not harmful**, such as spitting food. Don’t look at, smile at or scold your baby. Pretend she isn’t doing it until she stops.
- **Pick your baby up and move her to someplace safe** if she’s doing something dangerous. For example, take her away from a stairway. Put her in the middle of the room and say “You can crawl here.” This is redirecting.
- **Babyproof your home** so your baby has safe places to explore and move around. She should spend only short periods of time in a playpen, crib or infant seat.
- **Try to prevent problems.** There are some things you can do to prevent trouble before your baby learns to control her own behavior. For example, if your baby is playing with something you don’t want her to play with, like the dog’s tail or an electrical item, place a better choice in her hand or move her to a safer area.

Circle of Parents Support Group

Circle of Parents is a mutual self-help support group model. The meetings are free for anyone in a parenting role. Parents lead the groups with the help of a trained facilitator, talk about anything relating to parenting, and never judge other people’s situations or stories. For more information, call:

Bismarck/Mandan	701.667.3342
Devils Lake	701.662.7529
Dickinson	701.456.0007
Fargo	701.241.5700
Grand Forks	701.787.4216
Standing Rock	701.667.3342
Washburn	701.667.3342



Q and A

Does my baby need to wear shoes?

Shoes protect feet from rough or sharp surfaces. They don’t help your baby stand or walk. Until your baby starts walking in places that might hurt his feet, he doesn’t need to wear shoes.

Socks, booties or clothes with feet are enough. Bare feet are fine unless it’s cold in your home. When your baby starts to walk, going barefoot around the house or in sand or grass is good exercise.

When he does need shoes, be sure they fit well. There should be 1/2 inch of space in front of the toes. Shoes that are too big can cause falls, and shoes that are too small can cramp growing feet. A 1-year-old will outgrow shoes every six to eight weeks.

Soft, flexible shoes are best for walking. The sole should bend easily and have good arch support. High-top shoes are not needed to support the ankles.

Buy the cheapest shoes that fit well. A 1-year old will outgrow them every six to eight weeks. Change sock sizes when you change shoe sizes.

Hand-me-downs are fine *except* in the case of shoes. A worn shoe molds to a child’s foot. Used shoes can cause walking problems.



First Aid for Choking Infants

An infant may be choking on food or a small object if she collapses while eating or putting things into her mouth. She will have difficulty breathing if she is choking on something. Signs of breathing difficulty are wheezing (a whistling sound), gasping for air and choking.

If her airway is only partly blocked, she may have high-pitched noises when breathing in, great difficulty breathing, or very weak or no coughing. If the baby is able to breathe, cough or cry, air is getting through and the obstruction is not complete. In such a situation, you may make things worse by interfering. Get medical attention immediately.

An infant whose airway is completely blocked cannot breathe, cough or cry. The basic steps for removing an object from the airway of an infant are **back blows and chest thrusts**.

Back Blows

Lay your baby face down on top of your forearm with *her head lower than her chest*. Support her head and neck with your hand around her jaw and under her chest. Rest your arm on your thigh. Give up to five back blows forcefully between her shoulder blades with the heel of your hand. Then turn the infant over.

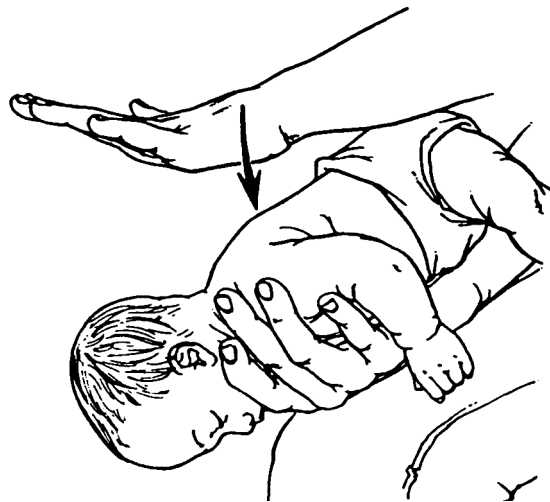
Turning the Infant Over: Place your free hand on your baby's back and sandwich her between your hands and arms. One hand holds her chest, neck and jaw while the other hand holds her back, neck and head. Holding the child between your hands and arms, turn her face up. Rest your arm on your thigh so her head is lower than her chest.

Chest Thrusts

Push on your baby's chest up to five times quickly with your fingertips on her sternum (breastbone). Each thrust should be about 1/2 to 1 inch deep. Your fingertips should be one finger width below an imaginary line between the baby's nipples. Your hand should come in from the side so your fingertips run up and down the sternum.

If your baby is still choking, repeat the sequence up to five back blows and up to five chest thrusts, and call

for emergency help. Continue back blows and chest thrusts until the object is forced out or the infant begins to breathe on her own.



Positioning an infant for back blows.



Positioning an infant for chest thrusts.

Learning First Aid

The American Red Cross, American Heart Association and many hospitals teach parents and other adults what to do if people of any age start choking, stop breathing or need CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Brain death from lack of oxygen can begin in just four minutes. Ambulances often take longer to arrive.

The instructions on this page are not a substitute for taking a class and practicing the techniques.

For more information about learning what to do if your infant's breathing or heart stops, call your local American Red Cross chapter or Heart Association office or your local hospital.

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a topic that people do not like to talk about, but it does occur. Child sexual abuse can occur when a person forces a child to have any form of sexual contact or makes a child perform sexual acts. Sexual abuse also is defined as when a child is engaged in sexual activities and the child cannot understand, is developmentally unprepared and cannot give consent, and/or that violates the law.

Child sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and may include:

- Sexual or inappropriate touching.
- Exposing children to adult sexual activity or pornographic movies and photos.
- Having children pose, undress or perform in a sexual fashion on film or in person.

Children may have some of the following symptoms as a result of abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Nightmares.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing.
- Clinging to parents.
- Pain, swelling, itching or discharge in genital area.
- Bruises, bleeding or cuts in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas.
- Frequent touching of genitals or masturbation.
- Change in appetite.
- Lying.
- Reenactment of abuse using dolls, drawings or friends.
- Avoidance of certain relatives or friends.
- Anger or mood changes.

For more information, contact these local and national organizations:

- Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota at 800.403.9932 or 701.223.9052,
- N.D. Council on Abused Women's Services at 888.255.6240 or 701.255.6240 or the National Children's Alliance at 202.639.5097.

Drinking From a Cup

Your baby might already be drinking from a cup. If not, this is a good time to start. By giving your baby a cup, you start the weaning process, introduce your baby to new textures and tastes, promote dental health and help prevent overfeeding.

Things to remember when starting with a cup:

- Use a small baby cup, with or without a lid and handles.
- In the beginning, fill only one-fourth full or less.
- Use only at meals or regular snack times.
- As baby drinks more from a cup, don't forget to put breast milk or formula in the cup.

Keep Baby Rear-facing in the Car

Your baby may be getting close to 20 pounds and ready to outgrow her infant car seat. Babies should ride rear-facing until they are at least 1 year of age. After baby outgrows her infant car seat, use a convertible car seat that can be used rear-facing for babies who weigh 30 to 35 pounds.

Foods for Baby

By now your baby is eating a bigger variety of foods. Continue to give your baby new foods and new textures. Some babies are ready to try soft table foods or finger foods. If you and your baby are ready, try the following:

Table foods – Use a fork to mash table foods like:

- Potatoes or sweet potatoes
- Carrots, squash or peas
- Bananas, canned pears, cooked apples

Finger foods – When starting with finger foods, give small amounts at a time, only as much as you want to pick up from the floor. Try finger foods like:

- O-shaped cereals, crackers or dry biscuits
- Mild cheese cubes or strips
- Cooked macaroni or rice
- Small pieces of soft vegetables like potatoes, green beans, carrots or peas
- Small pieces of soft fruit like pears, peaches or banana

Developing Good Food Habits

Did you ever stop to think why you don't like some foods?

Food habits usually are formed during childhood. Offer a variety of foods in the early years, and most children will eat these foods throughout life.

Children copy their parents, brothers and sisters. Let your baby see the family eating healthy foods, and she probably will eat these foods, too.

Here are some ways to encourage good eating habits:

- Provide pleasant, relaxed mealtimes.
- Feed your baby with the rest of the family. She will feel a belonging and can see family members eating different foods.
- Allow your baby to stop eating if she is full or when she wants. Her appetite will vary from day to day. The dining table should not be a battleground.
- Read baby food labels. Pay for good nutrition instead of water and thickeners. Plain fruits and meats are more nutritious than cobblers or vegetable-meat combinations.
- Serve colorful foods to make eating more fun.
- Develop chewing skills by offering different textures.
- Continue to offer food that baby rejects. Babies sometimes have to taste food 10 times before they like it.

Planning Baby's Meals

Most babies are ready for three meals a day plus snacks soon after 6 months of age. Babies need to drink breast milk or iron-fortified formula, *not* cow's milk, until they reach 1 year of age. The nutrition and fat content of breast milk or formula is needed for normal growth.

Some parents overfeed, so here is a sample menu with amounts a baby at different ages may eat.

	6-8 Months	12 Months
Breakfast	2 tbsp. infant cereal 2 tbsp. fruit or 1/4 c. juice Breast milk or formula	1/4 c. infant cereal 1/2 slice toast 1/4 c. orange juice 1/2 c. whole milk
Snack	Breast milk or formula 1/4 to 1/2 slice toast or 20 pieces dry cereal	1/2 c. juice or water 1/2 slice toast or 3 crackers
Lunch	2 tbsp. meat 2 tbsp. vegetable Breast milk or formula	1/4 c. meat, cheese or egg 1/4 c. vegetable 1/4 c. fruit 1/2 c. whole milk
Snack	2 tbsp. fruit 2 crackers Breast milk or formula	3/4 c. whole milk Finger foods
Supper	4 tbsp. infant cereal 1/4 c. fruit Breast milk or formula	1/4 c. meat, cheese or egg 1/2 c. starchy vegetable or potato 1/2 slice bread 1/4 c. green or yellow vegetable 1/4 c. fruit 1/2 c. whole milk
Bedtime	Breast milk or formula	3/4 c. whole milk

Choking

Some foods can easily slip into a child's throat and cause choking. Avoid foods that are small and hard or round and slippery. These include peanuts, celery, raisins, popcorn, whole grapes, hard candies, spoonfuls of peanut butter, raw carrots and circles of hot dogs. Cut hot dogs in half the *long* way and then into small pieces for children younger than 3 years old.

To prevent choking, children should be seated when they are eating. Never let a child walk, run or lie on her back with food in her mouth.

To check for product recalls or
to report an unsafe product, call 800.638.2772.



Fathers Are Important

A generation ago, it was called the Maternity Ward, and being involved with children wasn't considered a man's job.

Today it's called the Family Birth Center, and being involved is expected as part of a man's role.

It would be a mistake to claim that a child cannot be raised effectively by a single parent. It would also be a mistake to assume a father isn't really that important to his child during her growing years. Single moms and single dads are capable of being good parents. Most people would agree, however, that two parents have more time, energy and support to offer a child than one parent.

There are two main reasons why it's important for fathers to be involved in raising children. First, with the majority of women working outside the home, it is necessary for fathers to share home and child-rearing duties. Sometimes mothers unknowingly make it difficult for dads by expecting too much or by making dads feel they can never do the job as well as the mom. Moms, be sure to encourage a father's involvement. Dads, take a team approach and share in the joys of raising your child. Some dads enjoy time alone with their children to gain confidence in their parenting abilities.

Second, children have many positive traits when fathers are involved in their care, nurturing and guidance. These children do well in school, are more generous and kind, have positive relationships with others, and are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.

Remember, a father's involvement benefits the family and most importantly benefits the child.

Can You Spoil Your Baby?

Almost every new parent who rushes to the side of their baby will hear, "You'll spoil that child!" But pay no attention to this warning. It's not true.

After birth, babies are in a strange, new environment and are unable to do things for themselves. For the first year or so, it's impossible to spoil your baby by quickly responding to each cry or by cuddling and comforting. In fact, responding to your baby teaches him that he is important and that he can trust others to meet his needs. You are easing the baby's transition to the outside world.

By age 3 or 4 months, your baby is exploring the world and becoming more social, discovering his hands and how to use them, developing his own resources and learning to entertain himself. He's not as helpless anymore. Cuddling may no longer be needed for every cry. Soothing words, a nursery song or a toy may reassure him.

As your baby reaches 6 months of age, it is important to nurture his growing interest in exploring his world. This allows him to begin to develop a sense of independence. Several times each day, let him play by himself under your watchful eye, perhaps with a change of scenery.

Between 6 months and 1 year, your baby becomes more independent and feels more secure. You can help him be comfortable by creating a safe environment for him and by guiding his play. During this first year, he is building trust, and as this trust grows, his crying will decrease.



NORTH DAKOTA
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Community Health Section
600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200
ND Toll-free: 800.472.2286
701.328.2493

Address Service Requested

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Help Is Out There

HELP-LINE

North Dakotans with personal or family difficulties or concerns about the welfare of someone else can get help by calling the HELP-LINE, 800.472.2911. This toll-free number is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by the Mental Health Association of North Dakota. Trained volunteers on the HELP-LINE give immediate assistance or refer callers with more complex problems to professional help available in their area. HELP-LINE allows you to make an anonymous call to talk to a trained person.



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